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The Commonwealth at War. By A. F. POLLARD. New York. Longmans, Green and Company, 1917.—vii, 256 pp.

The war has tended to emphasize the inter-relations of journalism and history, two fields of literature which, in America at least, have been too sharply separated in the past. It has liberalized the discussion of current events, the province of journalism, by making it more historical, and it has vitalized the study of the past, the domain of history, by emphasizing its relation to the present. The proposition that what is now transpiring, if it is to be rightly appraised, must be studied in its historical setting, is so self-evident that it may safely be set down as an axiom. Professor Pollard, who is always illuminating and stimulating, now suggests, what will be by no means so generally accepted, that the study of the present, if not essential, is yet peculiarly valuable to the student of the past. In the preface to *The Commonwealth at War*, a volume made up of articles contributed by him to British and American periodicals during the first three years of the war, he says:

It is in the hope of assisting the study of history that these essays are reproduced in a more permanent and accessible form than those in which they first appeared; and the value of contemporary history is by no means confined to the age with which it deals. It is the essence of the historian's faith that past and present help to explain one another; and the light of history in the making around us illumines the making of history in the past. That is largely because we feel the present more than we can ever feel the past, and insight into human affairs is as much a matter of sense as it is of science. . . . Historical students will understand the Napoleonic wars all the better for having felt a similar tension. . . .

Does he not touch here upon a serious defect in our methods of historical training? Do we not in fact over-value professional technique at the expense of "insight into human affairs"? And may we not, as teachers of history, draw useful inferences from the fact that so many of the world's memorable historians have been men of affairs and students of "current events"?

Of the British Empire Professor Pollard has much that is informing and helpful to say. It is not, he tells us, quite so paradoxical as Voltaire's Holy Roman Empire, since it is at least partly British, but it is an empire only in a sense that makes nonsense of the word, "for it is like no other Empire that ever existed." Small wonder that the German professors of political science, surveying with mingled contempt and envy that straggling, heterogeneous, amorphous

aggregate, misunderstood the nature of it and predicted that the unwieldy colossus would crumble at the first shock of world war. From the German point of view the British Empire is all wrong and has no right to exist. For it does not aim, like the German, at unity, assimilation, standardization, the prevalence of a single type of Kultur. It is, and what to the German is even less comprehensible, it boasts of being a medley of governments, a Pantheon of faiths and a Babel of tongues. It does not accept Treitschke's dictum that "every state must have the right to merge into one the nationalities contained within itself." What keeps the Dominions within the British Commonwealth is not external coercion, nor even a sentimental sympathy with the "home land." They remain because they believe that their position in the imperial commonwealth is the best guarantee for the peaceful and untrammelled development of their national life.

So far as constitutional reform for the Empire is concerned, Professor Pollard is suspicious of the manufacture of political institutions and the framing of brand-new constitutions. Like Burke he places his trust rather in gradual growth and accumulating experience. No form of reconstruction that makes for uniformity, he feels sure, would be tolerable to the Dominions, and he is therefore opposed to any kind of imperial federation. "The imperial conference may develop into the imperial cabinet; but it will not become a federal council, and like its prototypes throughout the Empire it will remain unknown to the statute law of the British realms." In a paper that was evidently inspired by one of General Smuts' speeches delivered during his mission to England in the spring of 1917, he comments upon the international character of the British Commonwealth and its bearing upon the problem of a future league of nations.

Professor Pollard has studiously refrained from altering or modifying the sense of the articles which he reprints, though he must have been tempted in more than one place to "edit" what he had previously written. For example, the paper on "The Peace of the President" he would almost certainly not have written, in the form in which it stands, at any time subsequent to the declaration of war by the United States in April 1917. But he has no meretricious desire to acquire an unmerited reputation for foresight. All persons seeking a verdict of infallible prevision, politicians and publicists, as well as historians, would do well to ponder these words: "To modify the record of expressed opinion in the light of later events indicates a dishonest ambition for consistency or prescience, and is one of the most insidious forms of historical forgery."

R. L. SCHUYLER.